



Complex Homicides: Cullen, McGuire Murder Probes Put New Jersey in Spotlight

Dogged investigative work, cooperative effort and law enforcement leadership were key ingredients in 2005 as the Attorney General's Office coordinated two murder investigations that, because of their extraordinary nature, were reported by news media around the nation and around the world.

Cullen Case: Attorney General Harvey Interrogates Admitted Serial "Killer Nurse"

Although the Attorney General's Office was tireless in its pursuit of justice in the McGuire homicide case, it remained equally committed in 2005 to pursuing justice — and future remedies — in the case of former hospital nurse and admitted mass murderer Charles Cullen. Cullen was apprehended by the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office led by Prosecutor Wayne Forrest.

As a result of a multi-state investigation and plea negotiations led by the Attorney General's Office, Cullen entered into a "global" plea agreement in 2004 in which he admitted to murdering a total of 16 hospital patients in two New Jersey counties. Cullen pleaded guilty to murdering 13 patients — and attempting to murder two others

— in 2003 while working in the critical care unit at Somerset Medical Center. He also pleaded guilty to taking the lives of three patients in 1993 while working at Warren Hospital in Warren County. (Six additional murder charges were filed against Cullen by authorities in Lehigh County, Pa., in mid-October 2005).

As part of his plea agreement, Cullen agreed to provide full disclosure regarding murders he may have committed while employed as a student nurse or licensed nurse at 10 medical facilities located in five northern New Jersey counties, and two eastern Pennsylvania counties between 1984 and 2003.

He also agreed to provide information that would assist health care facilities in improving security and operating procedures — particularly involving patient access and medications.

In May 2005, Attorney General Harvey personally met with Cullen over three days to gather information from the accused serial killer on how hospitals can prevent "angel of death" killings in the future.

Cullen has said he may have killed as many as 40 patients, typically by injecting them with lethal doses of readily available medications. He was fired or resigned from five patient care facilities — including his first job — while his actions were under investi-



Serial nurse tells AG: Here's how you stop other 'angels of death'

As part of his plea deal, former RN who murdered patients meets with Harvey to outline



BY RICK HEPP
STAR-LEADER STAFF

Charles Cullen, the

Cullen's deeds — lessons that victims

learned from

THE NEW YORK TIMES METRO WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2005

Nurse Who Killed His Patients Can Donate Kidney, but He Must Get His Sentence First

By RONALD SMOTHERS

A former nurse who pleaded guilty to killing 23 patients at hospitals in New Jersey and Pennsylvania has received permission to donate a kidney to an acquaintance in New York, new to an acquaintance of his own

core in his attempt to help the potential recipient. But he is still working out details with officials in the two states to allow the donation.

Mr. Cullen angered relatives of his victims earlier this month when he said he wanted to exercise his right to miss the sentencing — and not to miss the sentencing — but

after a series of meetings, has agreed to allow the transportation of the victims' families to the New Jersey Superior Court in Somerset County, Mr. Cullen is expected to receive a life sentence instead of the death penalty for agreeing to

the death penalty and identify all of his alleged victims.

Before a final agreement, prosecutors have to sort out whether two more New Jersey counties will press charges against Mr. Cullen, authorities said. In addition, his lawyer has

asked about how the timing of his

of drugs into patients at a number of hospitals and a nursing home in the two states during a 16-year career. Early in the plea-bargaining process, he estimated that the number of victims could reach 40; so far, 23 have

been accounted for.

The organ transplant offer arose in the last several weeks as he headed toward sentencing.

Dr. Andrew Klein, director of the transplant center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and the living donor com-

plaint's transplant, said that such cases, involving convicted felons who want to donate organs, were "relatively uncommon."

He and other physicians acknowledged that there had been a number of cases in which inmates facing execution sought to donate organs; in some of those cases, the requests were seen by some as ploys to

hospitals can do

ing to ask for their

ows with the killer on

the New Jersey count

in counties continue

es committed by Cullen

ded guilty to murder

tempting to kill the other

in overdoes of read

ted nurse moved to

EN, Page 20)

gation. In some cases, hospitals did not notify law enforcement authorities about their suspicions, or disclose them to other potential employers who contacted them about Cullen.

Based on his discussions with Cullen, Attorney General Harvey said the most significant issues confronting health care officials and government regulatory agencies include: employee screening practices, controlling access to medications (particularly lethal ones), and devising systems that employees will understand provide "a certainty of detection" should they attempt to harm patients. Once interviews with the admitted serial killer are complete, information and perspective provided by him will help form the basis of recommendations to the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners, and the state Nursing Board.

As 2005 wound to a close, investigations into whether Cullen should be charged with additional patient murders were continuing in several New Jersey counties including Essex and Morris. There was no formal sentencing date yet established for Cullen, who avoided the death penalty by pleading guilty and agreeing to cooperate with prosecutors and health care officials.

McGuire Murder: Cutting-Edge Forensics and Careful Investigation

In June 2005, Attorney General Harvey announced the arrest of Melanie McGuire, the wife of a murdered Middlesex County man whose remains had been discovered a year earlier in three suitcases found along the coast in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

McGuire was arrested in Metuchen for murdering her husband. She was arrested on June 2, 2005 by New Jersey State Police Detectives and investigators with the Division of Criminal Justice after her car was stopped by a marked State Police cruiser.

The nature of the homicide was extraordinarily brutal. The victim, William McGuire, was shot in the head and chest and dismembered. But there were other extraordinary factors as well. A nurse, McGuire was the mother of two young sons — ages 4 and 5. She had been taken into custody only moments after dropping their children off at day care. McGuire had acknowledged being involved in an affair with a doctor at the fertility clinic where she worked. And, in yet another soap-opera-like development, an anonymous letter turned up following McGuire's arrest suggesting to law enforcement — and at least one newspaper — that McGuire had been framed by a relative of her murdered husband. The letter was delivered to the Division of Criminal Justice, but Assistant Attorney General Patty Prezioso maintained in court that the State had sufficient evidence to suggest the suspect, Melanie McGuire, had penned it herself.

Attorney General Harvey highlighted the hard work and cooperative effort of a number of law enforcement agencies in New Jersey and Virginia. Moreover, he cited the McGuire case as another example of how the effective application of cutting-edge technology is making a difference in solving crimes.

"This intensive 'cold case' investigation utilized the latest criminal forensic investigative

techniques and is an example of what can be accomplished by a veteran homicide prosecutor, detectives, investigators, and forensic scientists doggedly pursuing justice," Attorney General Harvey said.

The investigation was coordinated by Assistant Attorney General Prezioso, of the Division of Criminal Justice, Lt. Paul Morris of the New Jersey State Police Major Crimes Unit, and Deputy Chief State Investigator Joseph Buttich, Division of Criminal Justice. The investigation was conducted by State Police Det. Sgt. David Dalrymple, of the State Police Major Crime Unit and State Investigator Donald Macciocca of the Division of Criminal Justice, along with specialized investigators from both agencies. The Middlesex County Prosecutors Office, the Woodbridge Police Department, the Virginia Beach Police Department, and the (Virginia) Commonwealth's Attorney provided investigative assistance.

Melanie McGuire is charged not only with murdering her husband, but with perjury. The perjury charge is related to her seeking a court order, ostensibly to protect her from her husband, when she allegedly knew he was incapacitated or dead. An investigation into the possible involvement of accomplices in the murder continues.

Publicity regarding the McGuire case was so heavy that it received national coverage including a feature in People Magazine.



she filed after William vanished, she claimed he called her stupid and even threatened to kill her—though she didn't seek a restraining order until two days after he disappeared. (Following William's disappearance, Miller helped Melanie move, and he has testified before a grand jury.)

On April 26 Melanie allegedly used a fake Pennsylvania driver's license to buy a .38-cal. gun and bullets in Easton, Pa. She was indicted for shooting William between April 28 and May 5, once each in the head and chest, then, likely placin were dump

Ellen Tells All!
In CRACKING JOKES AND SHARING SECRETS, THE STAR TALKS ABOUT HER PAINFUL CHILDHOOD, HER ROMANCE AND HER INCREDIBLE COMEBACK

